DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 457 136 SP 040 213

TITLE	Leadership for Student Learning: Redefining the Teacher as Leader. School Leadership for the 21st Century Initiative. A Report of the Task Force on Teacher Leadership.
INSTITUTION	Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington, DC.
SPONS AGENCY	Metropolitan Life Foundation.; Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.; Ford Foundation, New York, NY.; UPS Foundation, Inc., Greenwich, CT.; Carnegie Corp. of New York, NY.
ISBN	ISBN-0-937846-17-1
PUB DATE	2001-04-00
NOTE	35p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Institute for Educational Leadership, 1001 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 310, Washington, DC 20036. Tel: 202-822-8405; Fax: 202-872-4050; e-mail: podmostkom@iel.org. For full text: http://www.iel.org.
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses (070)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Alternative Teacher Certification; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; *Instructional Leadership; *Leaders; Preservice Teacher Education; Teacher Administrator Relationship; Teacher Role; Unions
IDENTIFIERS	Professionalism; *Teacher Leaders; *Teacher Leadership

ABSTRACT

This report presents information from discussions by the Institute for Educational Leadership Task Force on Teacher Leadership, highlighting dilemmas surrounding teacher leadership and suggesting that education's policymakers should exploit the experience and capacity to lead today's schoolteachers. Overall, the system has not been organized to treat teachers as leaders. Many contradictory images of teachers exist (e.g., teachers as the heart and soul of the school versus overworked, isolated employees). Most school superintendents and principals still have patriarchal notions of leadership. Too few teacher training institutions offer courses emphasizing professionalism and leadership. A commonly cited barrier to grassroots teacher leadership is the pervasive role of the national teachers' unions in teachers' work lives. However, the quest for professionalism appears to be gaining serious momentum. There are now countless positive examples nationwide, many in the form of intensified and greatly broadened teacher training programs. If teacher leaders are to successfully become involved in policy formation and decision making, they need help from teachers nationwide, school districts, teacher unions, higher education, business leaders, and the mass media. Steps that teachers can take to begin such efforts are presented, noting questions to ask when getting started. (Contains 25 references.) (SM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

SP

ED 457 136

Leadership for Student Learning: Redefining the Teacher as Leader

School Leadership for the 21st Century Initiative

A Report of the Task Force on Teacher Leadership

April 2001

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

L. Clarke

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SP040213

PROJECT STAFF

Michael Usdan, *Project Director*
Barbara McCloud, *Project Associate Director*
Mary Podmostko, *Project Associate*

FUNDERS

Special thanks to the Metropolitan Life Foundation for its support of the work of the Task Force on Teacher Leadership. This publication was made possible by grants from the Metropolitan Life Foundation, the Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the United States Department of Education, the Ford Foundation, the UPS Foundation, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The statements made and views expressed are solely the responsibility of the authors.

ABOUT IEL

For more than thirty-five years, the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL)—a non-profit, non-partisan organization based in Washington, D.C.—has worked to achieve better results for children and youth. At the heart of our effectiveness is our unique ability to bring people together to identify and resolve issues across policy, program and sector boundaries. As a natural outgrowth of our work, we have created and continue to nurture diverse networks across the country. Today, IEL is working to help individuals and institutions increase their capacity to work *together*. We are building and supporting a cadre of diverse leaders, strengthening the capacity of education and related systems, and informing the development and implementation of policies. Our efforts are focused through five programs of work: *Developing Leaders; Strengthening School-Family-Community Connections; Governing; Connecting and Improving Systems that Serve Children and Youth; Improving Preparation for Work.* Please visit our Web site at www.iel.org to learn more about IEL.

For more information on the Initiative:
Mary Podmostko, *Project Associate*
Institute for Educational Leadership
1001 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 310
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 822-8405, ext. 31
Fax (202) 872-4050
podmostkom@iel.org
www.iel.org

Project staff would like to express gratitude for the input of George R. Kaplan, Martin J. Blank, Elizabeth L. Hale, and Hunter N. Moorman.

© 2001 by the Institute for Educational Leadership, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced in any way without the express written permission of the publisher.

ISBN 0-937846-17-1

Leadership for Student Learning: **Redefining the Teacher as Leader**

School Leadership for the 21st Century Initiative
A Report of the Task Force on Teacher Leadership
April 2001

The Initiative

Of the myriad problems that have plagued American public education in recent years, few have resisted resolution more stubbornly than the complex of issues surrounding school leadership. While we sense that it is not working as well as it must, there has been no concerted national call to find out why—and to suggest how to improve it. Yet without richly qualified, dedicated, and enlightened state-of-the-art professional and political leadership, efforts to bring about genuine reform to enhance student learning are destined to suffer, possibly even to fail. Sadly, the American public and the nation's political leaders have yet to acknowledge the intrinsic seriousness of this matter.

This is the backdrop to the ***School Leadership for the 21st Century Initiative***, a national effort led by the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) to clarify the issues of school leadership, shepherd them into the spotlight of public policy, and debate where they belong. To prod the process, the Institute created four task forces of experts, practitioners, business leaders, elected and appointed government officials, and others who met for a day and a half each in 2000 to probe one of four levels of school leadership—state, district, principal, and teacher—and examine ways to improve it as part of a massive, long-needed upgrading.

Not surprisingly, the task forces yielded differences in ideology and in how to approach the considerable dilemmas of leading public education. Had such differences not risen to the surface, the national debate about school leadership that the Initiative hopes to spark would be less spirited and robust than we expect it to be.

TASK FORCE ON TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Co-Chairs

Mary Hatwood Futrell, *Dean*, Graduate School of Education and Human Development, The George Washington University, Washington, DC

James A. Kelly, *Founding President*, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Grosse Point Farms, Michigan

Members

Buzz Bartlett, *Director of Corporate Affairs*, Lockheed Martin Corporation, Bethesda, Maryland

Joan Celestino, *Communication Skills Teacher*, Mineral Springs Middle School, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Linda Darling-Hammond, *Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Teaching and Teacher Education*, Stanford University, Stanford, California

Claudia Geocaris, *Assistant Principal for Teaching and Learning*, Hinsdale South High School, Darien, Illinois

Doug Hartman, *History Teacher/Administrative Intern*, Highlands Ranch High School, Highlands Ranch, Colorado

Kathy Havens, *Public Affairs Manager*, State Farm Insurance Companies, Bloomington, Illinois

Eduardo Holguin, *Fifth Grade Teacher*, Booker T. Washington Elementary School, Las Cruces, New Mexico

Deborah McGriff, *President*, Edison Teacher Colleges, New York, New York

Phil Metcalf, *Career and Technical Coordinator*, Wawasee Area Career and Technical Cooperative, North Webster, Indiana

Keith Nomura, *Principal*, Lincoln Middle School, Alameda, California

Rebecca Pringle, *Science Teacher*, Susquehanna Township Middle School, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Redefining the Teacher as Leader

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE 1

TEACHER LEADERSHIP AT GROUND LEVEL 3

CLASHING IMAGES 6

RATIONALES AND ROADBLOCKS 9

- Beleaguered Bosses
- Democracy Sidelined
- What Teachers Can Contribute
- How They Are Prepared
- On-the-Job Frustrations
- Unions and Teacher Leadership

THE PUSH FOR PROFESSIONALISM 14

- The National Commission on Teaching & America's Future
- The NCATE Effect
- National Board Certification
- Alternative Certification
- Business Speaks Up
- Material Rewards

TAKING OWNERSHIP 20

LEADERSHIP IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD 22

- Suggested Questions

SPEAK UP 25

REFERENCES 26

Preface

No single principle of school reform is more valid or durable than the maxim that "student learning depends first, last, and always on the quality of the teachers." Experts may disagree about how highly to value the size of a class or school, how the system functions, or whether it is adequately funded—but nobody's list of education's priorities fails to place teacher quality at or very near the top.

As a front-running national concern, the issue of improving teacher quality has taken on a controversial life of its own that extends beyond the world of public education and into our political culture, where it was a spotlighted feature of the presidential campaign of 2000. On a seemingly nonstop basis, this core element of schooling in America has become an editorial staple, the rationale for countless legislative debates, and the subject of numerous books, reports, and commentaries by commissions, task forces, councils, working groups, scholars, and journalists.

Typifying this concern most recently is *Investing in Teachers*, an analytical dissection of public school teaching in early 2001 complete with a package of recommendations by the National Alliance of Business in conjunction with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, and the Business Roundtable.

Any issue of public policy that can arouse the concern of the nation's media, politicians, scholars, and business interests—and have most of them on or near the same page—clearly demands more than just the rhetoric it usually receives.

How much good such attention is doing teachers and student learning is debatable. Indeed, a strong case can be made that its yield has been relatively modest, that, in fact, it has resulted in fewer tangible gains for teachers than those produced by the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) in helping to raise teachers' salaries and benefits, while working to stimulate the recognition and political backing that an undervalued line of work deserves.

In the early years of the new century, public school teaching still lags behind its nominal professional peers, both within and outside of public service, in public esteem. It is a dignity-challenged profession that often is more reviled than praised or even appreciated, and its members have few legitimate opportunities to defend it. It is no secret (but, rather, a national shame) that average salaries for teachers remain at or near the bottom of professional wage scales, while prospects for advancement in the conventional, career-oriented sense are all but shut off. Except through the teacher organizations, most of the profession's members normally have little or no effective representation in the key organizational, political, and pedagogical decisions that affect their jobs, their profession, and, by extension, their personal lives. These indispensable professionals to whom the nation entrusts its children daily rarely even have their own offices, computers, or telephones.

Mischaracterized though they often are as incompetent know-nothings, teachers are, paradoxically, also widely viewed as education's "franchise players," its indispensable but unappreciated leaders in the truest meaning of the word. It is unarguable that they instill, mold, and ultimately control much of the learning and intellectual development of the young people in their charge. It would be difficult to find a more authentic but unacknowledged example of leadership in modern life.

Yet we are loath as a nation to consider whether our roughly 2.78 million public school teachers should have any consequential role in schooling beyond that of closely controlled human mechanisms for funneling information into schoolchildren—and then getting out of the way. The infinite potential the nation's teachers possess for sharing their hard-earned knowledge and wisdom with

players in education's decision-making circles—or even for becoming part of these circles—remains largely unexploited. There are a growing number of glittering exceptions, but they do not add up to much in American public education's universe of 46-plus million students, 15,000-odd school districts, and 100,000-plus schools. If they constitute a trend toward recognizing the teacher as leader, it is surely a slowly developing one.

Even as some of education's smartest people try to explain how the term "teacher leader" can have real meaning, their message is too often lost in the Byzantine maze of educational governance that runs our schools. The notion that classroom teachers should be part of education's policy-shaping, decision-making system—and that they may actually be able to help redefine it and their own role—is hardly new, but the record nearly a generation after the current incarnation of school reform began refutes any serious claims that this is happening on a significant or measurable basis.

"The organizational structure of today's schools will not survive." Task Force member

Throughout their discussions, Task Force members consistently underscored two linked themes: 1) the vital role of the teacher in providing instructional leadership, especially at a time when the demands of up-to-date management, political pressure promoting tests and standards, and the near-universal obsession with across-the-board accountability are making principals more conscious of what happens in classrooms; and 2) the constantly reiterated proposition that well-prepared professional teachers are central to the decades-long push for school reform. In these pages, we will attempt to sift the evidence that emerged from the discussions of the IEL Task Force on Teacher Leadership, highlight the dilemmas that seem to surround the issue, and make the case that it is not too late for education's policymakers to exploit a potentially splendid resource for leadership and reform that is now being squandered: the experience, ideas, and capacity to lead of the nation's schoolteachers.

Teacher Leadership at Ground Level

Within the Task Force on Teacher Leadership there was strong sentiment that "the system has not been organized to treat teachers as leaders." The main paths to leadership for teachers who were interested have been 1) becoming an administrator—an obstacle-strewn route entailing added academic work, closely watched training, and tough competition for the few available slots; 2) organizing or hooking up with activist-type teacher movements (mainly in urban settings); and/or 3) becoming involved in local union affairs, thereby helping to improve conditions of work in the profession. As a group, however, the Task Force was more inclined to believe that, despite many impediments, the existing system is ripe for teacher-driven change from within—that is, for "teacher leadership" intrinsic to the role of teachers in the classroom, school, and larger policy environment.

Given a reinforcing school culture and a self-confident principal willing to experiment and to share some power, the raw potential for teachers to become a serious force in local school policy would appear to be enormous. Writing in the *Phi Delta Kappan* of February 2001, Roland Barth, a strong supporter of teachers as movers and shakers in schools, notes that, although "something deep and powerful within school cultures . . . seems to work against teacher leadership," there are at least ten areas, all of them having an impact on teacher-student relationships, where teacher involvement is actually essential to the health of a school:

"The effort to create a cadre of leaders within the teaching ranks is rhetorically supported by nearly everybody and actually supported by very few."

Harriet Tyson 1993

- choosing textbooks and instructional materials;
- shaping the curriculum;
- setting standards for student behavior;
- deciding whether students are tracked into special classes;
- designing staff development and in-service programs;
- setting promotion and retention policies;
- deciding school budgets;
- evaluating teacher performance;
- selecting new teachers; and
- selecting new administrators.

To professionals in other fields, exercising responsibilities comparable to these would usually be "no-brainers," mere starting points leading to the serious participation in the affairs of their organization that they had come to expect. It has long been part of the accepted wisdom in most sectors of the economy and the human services, certainly since the information age became a reality, that vertical hierarchy in organizations is giving way to horizontal information-sharing networks and collective decision-making. Rigid structures are becoming an anachronism, while organizational fluidity is taken for granted. In the human services model of 2000 (except, in most cases, education), leadership is conceived as being more transformational than transactional. And hearing all sides of an issue before setting policy and making final judgments is a fact of life, not a distant goal, as is still the case in most of public education's executive corridors.

Although the literature on the teacher as leader is thin, and some critics would argue that the products of today's teacher training institutions are not really qualified to take on more than the day-to-day responsibilities of managing a classroom full of children, contrary anecdotal evidence abounds. Across the country, teacher leaders have been making their presence felt beyond the classroom walls. These are teachers who seek and find challenge and growth. Writing almost ten years ago, Meena Wilson of the North Carolina-based Center for Collaborative Leadership, who interviewed high school teachers their peers had judged to be leaders, reported that such individuals support their colleagues, are "risk-oriented and collaborative," are often role models for students (although less so for their teacher colleagues), and are especially effective in mentoring or "peer-coaching." In the absence of valid statistical data, that is probably about where things stand in 2001.

In his *Phi Delta Kappan* article, Roland Barth states, "Few schools operate democratically." But when teachers take on leadership roles beyond the classroom their schools can become more democratic than dictatorial, and everyone benefits. The more democratic a school culture, "the more students come to believe in, practice, and sustain our democratic form of governance." In similar ways, teachers, principals, and the school itself will be strengthened in their roles. A more participatory ambiance is unlikely to materialize in settings where teachers' daily lives are overloaded with a staggering list of obligations, time is a precious commodity, and a climate of circumspection rather than creativity prevails in the school.

"Honor what we know. Hear our voices."
National Teacher Forum, 1993

Teacher leadership is not about "teacher power." Rather, it is about mobilizing the still largely untapped attributes of teachers to strengthen student performance at ground level and working toward real collaboration, a locally tailored kind of shared leadership, in the daily life of the school. Teachers must be an essential part of that leadership, never more so than when issues of instructional leadership are at stake. Teacher leadership can be a big part of the answer to questions like the following:

- How can we create the "professional community" that research shows is essential to peak school and student performance?
- How can we create school environments where each student is known and treated as an individual?
- What can be done to increase the quality of teachers and enhance the professionalism of teaching and teachers?
- How can the necessary bridge be made between challenging academic standards and accountability and what goes on in the classroom?
- What can be done to ensure that state and national policies to reform education are informed by the realities of the school and classroom and to enhance the probability of successful policy/reform implementation?

Teacher leadership is no fantasy. The case is too strong that it is becoming an increasingly visible presence in our schools and that it can contribute much to improving their health and performance. But implying that the teacher as leader is poised to become a controlling force in the near future is delusional.

If there is one urgent requirement that cannot be emphasized too often as teacher leadership inevitably becomes more influential, it is that teaching must become a genuine profession rather than one still seeking public legitimacy. Without greater recognition of them as partners in making

schools work better rather than as semiskilled functionaries, too many teachers are fated to remain second-class citizens in their workplace. School districts are becoming aware of these needs through reports such as Public Agenda's "Just Waiting to Be Asked?" and other sources, even if many schools, colleges, and departments of education may pay them too little attention.

There is no single path to enlightened teacher leadership, but there probably has never been a better time to examine ways to make it a positive fact of life. With 2.2 million teachers slated to leave the field in the next ten years, the American school can become a different—and better—place in the second decade of the 21st century. There is no shortage of models of teacher leadership; the job now is to choose what might suit a particular school or district and set about making it happen. Education's decision-makers must now make up their minds to do exactly this.

Clashing Images

In *Choosing Excellence*, the prize-winning veteran education journalist John Merrow describes teaching as "the noblest profession" and "the heart and soul of a school." In the same pages, though, he quotes a teacher's description of his world as "rushed, crunched, and isolated." And to this characterization, Merrow suggests, could be added "distrusted" and "undervalued."

> **"I heard a teacher describe his world as 'rushed, crunched, and isolated.' I'm tempted to add two others, 'distrusted' and 'undervalued.'"** John Merrow 2001

Underscoring and expanding Merrow's observations, Stanford University's Linda Darling-Hammond, a member of the Task Force, adds, in *Educating Teachers: The Academy's Greatest Failure or Its Most Important Future?*, that the ability of teachers is one of the most powerful determinants of student achievement—more influential, in fact, than poverty, race, or the educational attainment of parents. But if they are to do the job right, she points out in *The Right to Learn: A Blueprint for Creating Schools That Work*, teachers must have help in the form of "more intensive teacher training, more meaningful licensing systems, and more thoughtful professional development." In other words, the systems that support teacher development need to be much better than they are.

These comments by two thoroughly credentialed, nationally respected observers who want public education to succeed encapsulate a lot of the prevailing wisdom about teachers and their profession. Perhaps unintentionally, they also cast a shadow of doubt on the proposition that teaching is yet, in fact, a *bona fide* profession comparable in most ways to such stalwarts as, for example, medicine, law, and architecture. Even though most parents of schoolchildren (one-fifth of the population) like their children's teachers, it would be hard to find another supposedly professional field that triggers such consistent overall criticism and so many reminders of its alleged shortcomings.

Clearly, teaching lacks many of the qualities that stamp a real profession. Income, one of the more reliable determinants of professional status, still presents a discouraging picture. Data from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics and other sources put elementary and secondary school teachers in roughly the same wage bracket as telephone installers, nurses, and mail carriers, below that of police officers, detectives, and firefighters, and, when employee benefits are factored in, at a level of income comparable to that of senior noncommissioned or lower-level commissioned officers in the military services (who, however, have the option of retiring in their upper thirties or low forties with 20 years of service and of going on to second careers).

The debate over whether teaching is a legitimate, full-fledged profession whose members can or should be part of public education's leadership ranks evokes mixed responses. Vocal support for their inclusion, especially by the NEA and AFT, is generally strong though too often as a generality rather than as a reality. But those who doubt that teachers belong in the councils of leadership have a bulging arsenal of arguments such as the menial indignities of much of the work, the lack of independence, the still-inadequate reward system, and the possibility that teacher leadership might actually mean union control. Indeed, many of the hard realities of public school teaching tend to undercut the satisfying features of a career in the classroom. Some of the demeaning facts of the teacher's work life are so routinely accepted as natural features of the job that they are usually not even discussed when teacher issues appear on the agendas of school boards, editorial meetings, or campaign platforms. But they remain sizable burrs in the saddle of a line of work that strives for professionalism while tolerating practices that few, if any, professions would countenance.

Examples of how seriously the American teacher is being "rushed, crunched, and isolated"—and generally disrespected—pervade the field. With some exceptions, the very nature of today's schools militates against innovation, much less relatively free expression or professional "leadership" by anyone other than statutory supervisors. Teaching is a "flat" career lived out in jobs and schools that Vivian Troen and Katherine C. Boles described in *Teacher Magazine* as "legacies of their 19th-century industrial-style origins, with principals viewed as bosses and teachers as replaceable workers on an assembly line. This history has bred a school culture of isolation and egalitarianism that effectively stymies all attempts at reform." This is not the stuff of leadership-in-waiting.

This Is Teacher Power?

"Principals have always told their subordinates how to act. Teachers have had little voice in workplace issues such as the choice of curriculum material, the types of tests used to evaluate instruction, the scheduling of classes, and the allocation of instructional resources. Teachers have not exerted much control over their profession as a whole. They lack the structures and processes present in other professions . . . that control entry into the profession, and weed out those unqualified to practice. A lack of autonomy on the part of teachers has been problematic because it affects productivity and commitment to the workplace and therefore ultimately affects their teaching capabilities."

Source: Terry, P.M. (1999–2000). Empowering teachers as leaders. *National Forum of Teacher Education Journal 10E*, 3. Lake Charles, LA: National Forum Journals. Available at http://www.nationalforum.com/TERRYteBe3.html

The teacher who may lack the healthy self-respect that sustained encounters with energetic young people demand is destined to be additionally frustrated by the strictures that too often epitomize daily life at work. Disillusioned by daily, even hourly, indignities such as ceaseless interruptions by public address announcements, being ordered to "teach to the test," and a legion of others, 30 percent of all new teachers now last less than five years, while half of those in urban schools are gone within three. They see little hope of gaining the respect and relative autonomy that a true professional usually expects. And some, routinely assigned as new teachers often are to a district's worst schools, leave during or at the end of their first year—frustrated, disillusioned, and often self-doubting. Teaching is no longer a lifetime career. And that weakens it—immeasurably.

At the day-to-day level, the career itself has always had deflating qualities. To succeed within it, teachers in many systems have traditionally needed only to do enough to get by and, if ambitious, take off-duty courses in almost any field, even irrelevant ones, in order to ensure relatively regular pay hikes and occasional bonuses within a carefully calibrated salary schedule. As in most taxpayer-supported endeavors, it is not easy to fire anyone for inadequate performance. In most settings, little or no credibility is given to the experience-based judgments or opinions of teachers. To do their jobs right, responsible teachers in many systems lay out as much as $1,000 annually for essential equipment and learning materials that budget-conscious school officials decline to provide.

As for the "shared decision-making" that, in one form or another, typifies the workplace in many professions, one teacher summarized his and his peers' reaction to how it works in education with the pithy observation that "as soon as they make a decision, they share it with us."

But for every, or nearly every, shortcoming in the vastness of teaching there is usually a mitigating plus or at least a plausible cause or explanation. If they don't step forward to challenge existing leadership or harbor ambitions of their own beyond the classroom, many teachers contend, it is because they prepared and signed on to work directly with schoolchildren, not bureaucrats. Whatever

the ambiance in the school may be, this is what they are most satisfied doing. Although most appointed school officials began as teachers, numerous studies indicate that teachers generally have little interest in succeeding them; they have found their niche in the classroom where, despite agonizing and demeaning days that can sometimes seem like weeks, the satisfactions can be genuine and deeply personal.

"Where principals fear they will be relegated to becoming operational managers as a result of teachers taking on new leadership roles, teacher leadership cannot succeed."

Vivian Troen and Katherine Boles 1993

This is not to imply that teachers do not value recognition. They do. Rewards such as cash bonuses, awards, and various kinds of incentive grants are always welcome. But they are not always enough. Teachers are the core professional resource in every school in the nation, and they must be involved wherever possible in policies and decisions affecting how that resource is deployed. Such participation is a practical application of what Richard Elmore of Harvard calls "distributive leadership."

Some researchers have made the case that, as a matter of personal choice rooted in their own personalities and value systems, teachers crave neither the limelight of public attention nor the responsibilities and headaches of leadership of any kind outside their classroom fiefs. Most have not attended prestigious, high-pressure colleges and universities where competition and careerism may be campus-wide preoccupations. But any stereotype of today's teacher as what the education writer Harriet Tyson, in *Who Will Teach the Children?*, calls "the noble, literature-loving spinster of earlier eras" also has no validity today. John Goodlad, one of the most esteemed oracles of public education, contends that, contrary to popular impressions, education is actually attracting idealistic, bright, and able people who are "alert to the stupidity of much of the simplistic reforms that are being proposed, which they know won't work. Their bosses don't want bright people around who are going to resist when they impose things on them. So the schools lose the best, and who can blame them for leaving?" (Merrow 2001)

These clashing images of our nearly three million teachers do not seem at first glance to leave much room or hope for them to take on a conspicuous role in school leadership, especially in an ambiance of high-stakes testing and the ever-increasing politicization of education. To buy into this perspective is to underrate a huge and diverse population of caring Americans. Some of the very characteristics that shape informed leadership are exactly what our teachers possess—in abundance.

Rationales and Roadblocks

Beleaguered Bosses

As it is presently constituted, educational leadership needs all the help it can get. Whether at the level of the school building, district, or state, today's education leaders have few admirers, many skeptics, and a lot of tough critics. Media commentators, both print and electronic, as well as reformers of various ideological leanings, dismiss them all too glibly as comprising an obstructive "establishment," while others simply label public education's front offices and its inhabitants "the blob." Whatever it is called, and whether or not it is performing well, this guiding force in America's schools, its leadership, no longer enjoys the necessary trust of much of the larger population.

Since the principals, district leaders, and school board members who are the subjects of this criticism are reluctant to fight back in public, even though most of the negative judgments of them are unwarranted, the idea that existing forms of school leadership are failing us has gained traction. And it goes beyond that. With some signal exceptions, incumbents are often savagely labeled by the media, in particular, as (pick one or a combination) unimaginative, dictatorial, risk-averse, imperious, regulation-addicted, initiative-squashing, power-hungry, anti-intellectual, time-serving bureaucrats wedded to a past that modern leadership doctrine outgrew decades ago. These charges are bandied about with little regard for the real-world problems that plague education's top brass. They are mostly wrong, and they hurt. They also complicate efforts to bring teachers into leadership roles.

"Most school superintendents and principals are still wedded to patriarchal notions of leadership, but some are beginning to learn that teachers are experts on certain matters and should be partners rather than subordinates in the running of schools."
Harriet Tyson 1993

Democracy Sidelined

As the discussions of the Task Force on Teacher Leadership proceeded, it was clear to this representative group of educators and concerned lay leaders that they were confronting a concept—the teacher as a vital part of the policy-framing and governing processes—that may have been around for a long time but which has somehow never loomed large in the nation's school systems. Given the problems that teachers are experiencing at the turn of the century and the popular impression that they need badly to take care of their own house, it is perhaps understandable that becoming part of the structure of leadership at this time is a back-burner issue. It deserves better.

As long as school leadership remains mostly top-down and hierarchical, there is little chance that teachers will ever be more than fringe players—available as a resource when called upon, but seldom directly and continuously involved in decisions of substance. School district leaders often trot out the buzzword of teacher leadership as an established reality in their domains, but, Troen and Boles contend, touting participation by teachers in routine matters in the school rather than just in their classrooms is "somewhat like calling a banana republic a democracy if a few of its citizens are allowed to vote." Authoritarian governance styles may have fallen out of favor in most sectors of society since these words were written in 1993, but what appears to have replaced it is sometimes neither better nor appreciably more democratic, notably in the schools.

As leadership in business, technology, various professions, and public institutions has become more participatory and representative over the past 30 years, education has also taken to boasting of the inclusion of teachers, its lowest-ranking professionals, in its policy-creation and management processes. But the level of inclusion ordinarily does not deserve to be bragged about. True, classroom teachers in many schools are at least tangentially involved in their principals' and district leaders' concerns about curriculum, supplies, discipline, testing and standards, student and family problems in the school, and a few other classroom-specific concerns. In addition, some schools promote at least a veneer of participation though principal-led "leadership councils" or their equivalents. And most principals, especially those in middle and high schools, ask classroom teachers to take on the posts of department chairs, team and grade leaders, heads of curriculum committees, and others—often with extra pay and/or slightly reduced teaching schedules.

The greater likelihood, though, is that the teacher's role in school leadership is still limited to what goes on in or directly affects the classroom: how to teach creatively within narrow curricular specifications, how to organize class time, how to assess progress, how to deal with troubled children and their families. The expertise and good judgment of classroom teachers in all of these matters patently strengthen a school's capabilities, but they do not constitute leadership as it should be defined—or, in the case of teachers, redefined.

What Teachers Can Contribute

Teachers offer something beyond expertise. But at a time when nearly all of public education is in the grip of the rush to politically mandated tests, standards, and accountability, they may be under heavier pressure than they have ever known. The special qualities that the excellent ones possess—knowledge of children and subject matter, empathy, dedication, technique, sensitivity to communities and families, readiness to help, team spirit, ability to communicate, and many more—should be in even greater demand than ever.

"In common with other leaders, teacher leaders seek challenge, change, and growth." Meena Wilson 1993

These attributes also are an essential side of school leadership. But in the realm of schoolwide policy as distinguished from what happens in the classroom, the unique voice of teachers is too seldom heard or their views even solicited. Addressing this point, *The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 2000: Are We Preparing Students for the 21st Century?* found that many secondary school faculty members felt alienated, that substantial numbers felt "left out of things going on around them at their school" or that "what they think doesn't count very much at their school." It is readily apparent that, except in unusual cases, the basic decisions that affect the work lives of teachers, as well as the performance of their students, come from on high, from top-down leadership in its most pristine form. In most settings, teachers have little or no say in scheduling, class placement, how specialists are assigned, decisions on hiring new teachers, and, perhaps most telling at ground level, the preparation of budgets and materials. This is not the stuff of professionalism.

How They Are Prepared

Today's teachers are coming into the job market as the unevenly prepared products of some 1,300 schools and colleges of education that have historically constituted a largely change-resistant system. Reports about the escalating number of teacher preparation institutions that are breaking with tradition are refreshing, but they are still exceptions in a carefully preserved corner of academe that abhors revolutionaries, discourages mavericks, and is not too comfortable with mild dissenters.

Organizations such as the revitalized National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) have their hands full trying to help transform these institutions into the modern, first-class learning centers they must become if our teachers are to resist a beckoning slide into mediocrity.

The professionalism (and the beginnings of a consciousness about the teacher as leader) that should be a core feature of teacher training is not easily acquired in these settings. Though most teacher-training institutions claim to be making their curricula more responsive (and several hundred appear to be succeeding), many parent universities have few qualms about treating them as what John Merrow describes as "cash cows," that is, revenue-suppliers for other parts of the university where expenses are higher, such as programs in law, medicine, engineering, and nursing. Linda Darling-Hammond adds, "If you are preparing to be a teacher, you can expect about half of the tuition money that you put into the till to come back to support your preparation." This is training on the cheap, and it carries no guarantees of success.

Four Kinds of Teachers

Robert Hempel spent four years studying ten schools within the Coalition of Essential Schools and found that different factions of teachers typically emerge within each school: the "cynics," the "sleepy people," and the "yes-but" people–and the teacher leaders. Even within these reform-minded schools, he found that the teacher leader never constituted more than 25% of a faculty.

Source: Barth, R.S. (2001, February). Teacher leader. *Phi Delta Kappan 82,* (4).

While a heavy concentration on classroom teaching methods (to the detriment of substantive academic subjects) often appears to be the *raison d'etre* of teacher training faculties, more institutions need to think about exposing future teachers to discussions of the larger policy issues of education. Although a growing number of institutions have made progress in this area, too many new teachers still report for duty largely uninformed in the essentials of the professional, cultural, and political worlds they are to inhabit—and what they do know they have often acquired on their own. There is a growing and encouraging realization that teachers need practical knowledge about contemporary family life, immigrant and minority group children, and the political and social currents that swirl about public education. However, too few teacher training institutions offer courses that treat these subjects in sufficient depth, and practically none below the graduate level scratch the surface of training in management and leadership.

"Schools of education don't know how to teach the arts and other areas."

Task Force member

On-the-Job Frustrations

Teacher training is not the only obstacle. Once hired and in the pipeline, young teachers often find that what they have learned in their four or more years of preparation has not equipped them for what they may encounter in their new classrooms. In a few districts, although hardly the norm, there are horror stories: freshly minted teachers assigned to instruct high schoolers in out-of-subject content areas, decaying and unsafe buildings, students with daunting family problems, neighborhoods with scarcely controllable violence, facilities comparable in some grotesque cases to those in their cities' jails. Newcomers come to realize all too soon that their education professors were either poorly informed about the downsides of teaching or that they

simply didn't bother to share their knowledge and perspectives. More than they ever would have anticipated, new teachers too often enter a world in which administrative orthodoxies repeatedly combine with indifference in confronting often overwhelming problems. Rocking these boats is all but impossible when personal survival becomes the newcomer's mantra.

As policy analyst Denis Doyle observed in the March 2001 issue of *The School Administrator,* modern workers are "self-guiding problem solvers and troubleshooters. No longer . . . is passivity valued. To the contrary, independence and initiative are." Except, he might have added, in a huge swath of the country's classrooms where "go along to get along," a favorite slogan of Sam Rayburn, a long-time Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, normally sets the mood and tempo. This may have been the path to political success in a bygone era, but it is no prescription for school leadership or reform—or even a miniscule role in them—in the 21st century.

"Fellow teachers . . . hold the power to unlock one another's leadership potential and to foster its growth." Roland S. Barth 2001

Unions and Teacher Leadership

A frequently cited barrier to grass roots teacher leadership is the supposedly pervasive, even controlling, role of the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers in the work lives of the nation's teachers. This description may apply in some districts and political settings where union functionaries may appear to rule the roost, but it distorts reality. Although the literature on the teacher as leader usually downplays the teacher organizations and the mass media are seldom kind to them, the inescapable fact is that most of the tangible gains teachers achieved in the second half of the 20th century would not have materialized without union activism and leadership. Many critics and analysts conveniently forget that the relatively decent salaries teachers now receive (decent, that is, compared to what they might be earning without successful union-led negotiations), their employee benefits packages, and their success in lobbying in Washington, state capitals, and local districts for increased funding for education owe much to union leadership. All have had a positive impact on how teachers are treated and perceived. They also strengthen the potential of teachers as leaders.

The commonly heard accusation that the unions have been so focused on bread-and-butter concerns that they have shown little interest in educational content is also mostly spurious. Admittedly, there are periods when strikes and other political-type concerns are dominant and professional matters must take a back seat—way back, sometimes. And members do have legitimate complaints about the overly bureaucratic style and operational methods of some union headquarters. But the long-run effect of the unions' presence has been to elevate the professional stature and self-regard of teachers, and this can only be positive. If further proof were needed, it came in a study revealing that states with a higher percentage of teachers represented by unions tended to report higher SAT and ACT schools than those with less representation. Based on their research as summarized in the Winter 2000 issue of the *Harvard Educational Review*, the three coauthors of the study (Steelman, Powell and Carini) said, "That we found such a strongly consistent positive relationship across so many permutations of analysis should give pause to those who characterize teacher unions as adversaries to educational success and accountability."

Promising Practices: The TURN Way

In 1997 the presidents of two influential locals of the American Federation of Teachers launched TURN, the Teacher Union Reform Network of AFT and National Education Association locals, with the avowed intention of promoting new forms of union/management collaboration and recasting unions to center their work more on student achievement. With participation by more than 20 NEA and AFT locals from some of the nation's most populous school districts, the self-described "TURNsters" have drafted an ambitious reform agenda for schools, the teaching profession, and for the unions themselves. Among TURN's primary goals are advancing school accountability programs, influencing teacher preparation, and, directly affecting teacher leadership, improving professional development–all of them areas that have traditionally not been high priorities in union circles.

Underlying TURN's approach is promoting what two well-known union leaders, Adam Urbanski, the long-time reformer and president of the Rochester (NY) Teachers Association/AFT, and Roger Erskine, former executive director of the Seattle Education Association/NEA, call "new union models that can take the lead in building and sustaining high-achieving schools through improving the quality of instruction." A key issue is TURN's advocacy of pay systems that are "knowledge- and skill-based," in effect shifting the balance somewhat from contracts based largely on seniority to a focus on what teachers know and can do.

Like any new group with large visions, TURN has some internal disagreements, and its success is by no means guaranteed. But it is a legitimate (and well-funded) reform-focused group that takes a large view of the teacher's role and could be helpful in advancing teacher leadership.

Source: Urbanski, A. & Erskine, R. (2000, January). School reform, TURN, and teacher compensation. *Phi Delta Kappan 81*, 5. Available at http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kurb0001.htm

The Push for Professionalism

Happily, the quest for professionalism and the stature that goes with it—without which the idea of the teacher as leader would be a far-off dream instead of an achievable reality—finally appears to be gaining serious momentum. There are now countless examples scattered around the country, many of them in the form of intensified but greatly broadened teacher training programs, of institutions where visionary educators simply refuse to kowtow to established ways of doing things. Many are altering the balance between method and substance in preparing teachers. They are strengthening their content preparation as well as preparation for content pedagogy, curriculum development, and assessment. Several hundred of these programs blend undergraduate and graduate programs into five-year regimens from which the student gains two degrees while experiencing protracted involvement in school life far beyond the minimal opportunities that conventional practice teaching affords. Others offer teaching internships, often in a growing number of professional development schools, that provide sustained exposure while enabling the candidates as individuals and in teams to decide whether teaching really is their best career option.

Promising though these examples of progress may be, they are still a minority in the 1,300-institution domain of teacher preparation. Less dramatic but likely to be equally effective in the long run, notably in helping to pave the way to teacher leadership, are broader kinds of influences such as these:

The National Commission on Teaching & America's Future

The 1996 report of the prestigious National Commission on Teaching & America's Future (NCTAF) called for no less than a thorough revamping and restructuring of the teaching profession, which, it declared, had suffered from decades of neglect. Likening itself to the Flexner Report of 1910, which led to the transformation of the medical profession, the Commission's report, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*, provided a detailed blueprint for recruiting, preparing, supporting, and rewarding excellent educators. Such terms as "overhaul," "reinvent," and "call to action" dot this historic report, which lays out a detailed agenda for restructuring the world of the American teacher. Unlike so many "blue ribbon" commissions, the NCTAF has also been able to monitor progress and to assist 20 states and nine school district partners in reaching its goals.

The NCATE Effect

In a quietly effective fashion, and with the backing of numerous education organizations, the reform-minded National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) has helped get all but a few states to raise the standards bar for classroom teachers. Working with state agencies and teacher training institutions, NCATE is leading the way in insuring that colleges have a content-oriented system in place to facilitate assessment and that state licensing requirements are aligned with accreditation standards—a tough, thankless task destined to generate few headlines. Participation in the State/NCATE Partnership Program vaulted from 19 states in 1990 to 46 in 2001—proof that at the least, as the National Conference of State Legislatures asserted, NCATE "is a cost-effective means to upgrade teacher preparation in the states." In practice, it is much more. Though probably not yet fully quantifiable, the effects of these NCATE-guided steps toward accountability and mea-

sures to upgrade the profession are almost certainly being felt across the country in the early years of the new century. They exemplify education reform in action in a manner that should benefit both the quality of the teaching enterprise and the institutional and governmental infrastructure that supports it.

National Board Certification

The respected National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) epitomizes the ideal of the high-quality American teacher. Established at the recommendation of *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* of 1986, a product of the Carnegie Foundation's Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, the NBPTS has established nationally applicable qualifications and procedures for certifying teachers that may be the most rigorous yet sensible of recent times. Those who survive a lengthy, costly, and demanding process are widely recognized as embodying all the attributes of top-flight professional teachers. The roughly 10,000 who have successfully completed the NBPTS regimen (4,727 of them in 2000—the admittedly slow pace has been quickening) achieve almost instant recognition, usually receive tangible rewards such as increased pay and advisory roles, and inevitably become role models for their colleagues.

"Teachers must have access to a range of job-related roles for growth within the profession, such as serving as mentors for new teachers, peer assessors, or adjunct university faculty."
Julia E. Koppich 2001

Alternative Certification

Alternative certification, that is, credentials awarded teacher candidates who have not spent four or five years training to become teachers, has beckoned for over three decades to diverse groups and individuals. It has taken different forms and exposed public education to different breeds of aspiring teachers. Frowned upon by many mainstream educators and institutions, alternative certification nevertheless does represent something new and possibly invigorating in the field. The National Commission on Teaching & America's Future recognized that the aggressive policies needed to put a qualified teacher in every classroom include developing different approaches to preparation including alternative pathways to teaching for mid-career professionals, college graduates with no teaching certification, and paraprofessionals.

Although they are numerically miniscule in terms of the numbers of teachers prepared, alternative certification programs have been around, in one version or another, since at least the mid-1960s. The possibility exists that some of them may over time embody a different, more venturesome style of leadership than that which the products of conventional teacher training generally provide.

As a rule, the backgrounds of these nontraditional teachers reveal more diversity than is found in the teaching force in most typical schools. When Teacher Corps, the Johnson Administration's then-revolutionary program to prepare young people to serve in urban districts, began in 1965, it drew recent Peace Corps volunteers, liberal arts majors already working in non-teaching jobs, professionals from other fields, and a broad mix of public service-oriented young people. These roughly 3,500 feisty recruits survived an obstacle course that combined low-paying two-year internships in inner-city classrooms, "volunteer" work in low-income communities, and course work in schools of education—all of which usually led to a legitimate graduate degree and certification. The national Teacher

Promising Practices: Alternative Pathways

Although expressing concern about "back-door and off-the-street hiring that puts unqualified persons in classrooms," the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future nevertheless applauds "the growing number of teacher education institutions that have developed alternative routes to teaching." The following alternative programs are highlighted in NCTAF's 1996 report:

The California Math/Science Teacher Corps Project recruits mid-career professionals with math, science and liberal arts backgrounds to teach elementary and secondary students via an internship which can be completed in a year or less at California State University, Dominguez Hills. For more information, visit http://www.scudh.edu/extendeded/calcorps.htm

Project Promise at Colorado State University is a three semester teacher preparation program leading to licensure for candidates with a bachelor's degree. The program includes five field experiences and weekly feedback in addition to intensive instruction. For more information, visit http://promise.cahs.colostate.edu/PP/Info.html

The Delta Effective Leaders in Teaching at Arlington program at The George Washington University's Graduate Education Center in Arlington, Virginia, offers a part-time program for working professionals who wish to transition to secondary school teaching. For more information, visit http://www.gwu.edu/~mastergw/programs/secondary_ed

The Navaho Teacher Education Program recruits undergraduates, para-educators who wish to finish their degrees, and graduates to be certified Navaho teachers. For more information, contact Roxanne Gorman, Director, at roxannegorman@navaho.org or (520) 871-7602.

Source: National Commission on Teaching & America's Future. (1996). *What matters most: Teaching for America's future.* New York, NY: Author. Available at http://www.nctaf.org/publications/whatmattersmost.html

Corps effort cost the federal government roughly $500 million from 1965 to 1981. It produced a lot of committed leaders for education, especially teachers (and future leaders) from minority groups.

Subsequent "alternative" programs have dotted education's landscape in 40 states. By 2000, according to the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, as many as half of the group's member institutions offered at least one alternate route, and *Education Week* and the Pew Charitable Trust's *Quality Counts 2000* estimated that 80,000 people had been licensed in nontraditional ways, 8,000 of them in New Jersey alone. Teach For America, a heavily publicized 12-year-old program to place liberal arts graduates of elite colleges and universities in inner city classrooms for two years before they start their "permanent" careers in other fields, now has 4,000 alumni. Although critics cite the lack of adequate preparation for the program's graduates, it has been claimed that more than half of TFA teachers have stayed in public education, where many of them are well regarded. Some who have left the classroom have gone into administrative posts, several have become charter school founders, and one, Sara Mosle, has been an outstanding writer for the *The New York Times Magazine* and *The New Yorker*, mostly on education, as well as a mentor of inner city children after leaving teaching.

Though statistically insignificant in the nearly three million-person behemoth that is America's teaching force, these and other unconventional programs now include former military officers, business people, police officers, government employees, and professionals from other sectors. Many were

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

successful but "unfulfilled" in their previous careers and bring "leadership personalities" to the school. Others, such as those in paraprofessional career ladder programs that eventually lead upward to teaching posts in urban areas, come at teaching from a different job perspective, that of classroom aide. Often sponsored by the American Federation of Teachers, these "para-educators" usually live near the schools in which they work, know how their students live and what they endure daily, and, quite often, are also seasoned advocates and activists. This brand of leadership is not always welcome in the schools, but it surely helps keep policy-framers' feet to the fire.

Business Speaks Up

In *Investing in Teaching*, the 2001 report calling for "a renaissance in teaching," the National Alliance of Business and three of the most potent national organizations representing both large corporations and small business focused heavily on "an agenda that will elevate teaching to a profession" through improved preparation and professional development, NBPTS certification, higher pay, and, among others, access to job-related opportunities for growth such as mentorships, peer assessors, and possibilities of becoming adjunct university faculty members. With the understandable exception of its emphasis on readying students for success in the workplace (and then for higher education and life, in that order), *Investing in Teaching* could have been issued by a coalition of distinguished educators and policy-makers rather than business leaders.

The simple fact that a coalition of powerful business groups produced a thoughtful and constructive document in 2001 on teaching in America underscores the critical importance of the subject. The form and direction of the sponsors' follow-up will merit close watching. Exercised properly, the clout of such giants as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Business Roundtable, and National Association of Manufacturers behind this NAB product could be enormously helpful in promoting and nurturing teacher leadership.

Material Rewards

The salary structure for teachers has historically been a disincentive for young people to enter the field. In the booming economy of the 1990s and early 2000s, in particular, the urge to teach has been squelched to an unknown degree by the explosive growth of salaries for young college graduates almost everywhere else in society. While teacher salaries are rising, they still do not suffice, as Public Agenda pointed out in 2000 in *A Sense of Calling*, which found that three-fourths of a cross-section of teachers it polled agreed "strongly" or "somewhat" that they are underpaid. But change is in the air. In early 2001, *Education Week* reported that at least 39 governors and legislators in 28 states from Alabama to Washington were making pay raises for teachers a high priority. Reflecting the mood of the times, their proposals were usually made in one or a combination of three forms: across-the-board raises, performance-pay plans, and cash bonuses.

Promising Practices: Businesslike in Arizona

Quality of teaching, says the Milken Family Foundation, isn't just an education issue; it's also an economic issue. If school reform is to work, teachers must have opportunities for professional growth and career advancement along with salaries competitive with those in other fields instead of falling as much as 75% behind them. No less important, according to the Foundation, is commanding respect from society and the young people teachers serve. No argument there.

The Foundation's Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) is piloting an effort in five Arizona schools that addresses just these imperatives. At first glance, TAP offers no single feature that hasn't been tried–more than once and, in fact, fairly frequently over the past 30 years. The difference is in one key detail: the Milken Foundation is convinced that these goals can be pursued simultaneously and is prepared to support an expensive effort to see it happen.

The TAP model is nothing if not ambitious. It envisages multiple career paths in which teachers progress along a continuum or ladder of increasingly demanding requirements, eventually becoming "leaders, decision-makers, and mentors." Systematic measurement of every aspect of teacher performance is a core feature. Professional Growth Blocks will "provide . . . opportunities for teachers and administrators to learn, plan, and grow collaboratively." And school districts will be hiring higher-paid, higher-quality teachers.

TAP is grounded in a strong belief in market forces and is thus strongly backed by some of K-12 schooling's more conservative elements, including the Education Leaders Council. The teacher unions are watching it closely and, at least in its early stages, uncritically.

Source: Milken, L. (2000). *Teaching as the opportunity: The Teacher Advancement Program.* Santa Monica, CA: Milken Family Foundation. Available at http://www.mff.org/publications/publications.taf

Tying wage increases directly to teacher leadership, NEA President Bob Chase said, "we need to look at how we induct people into the profession and let them be part of the decision-making process in schools." Decision-makers or not, many teachers still double as late shift and weekend waiters and waitresses, bartenders, supermarket and department store cashiers, and sales clerks. There is a long way to go, even in places such as affluent Montgomery County, Maryland, where starting salaries for teachers are rising to $38,683 annually, but where most of the system's teachers still cannot afford to own houses. This jurisdiction had ten applicants for every vacancy in 2000, while the less prosperous neighboring Prince George's County was still scrambling to fill vacancies even after the 2000–2001 school year began. Selfless though many teachers may be, money and agreeable working conditions still matter very much.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Promising Practices: Montgomery County, Maryland

The teachers' union in Montgomery County, Maryland, has broken new ground with the ratification of a contract that "recognizes teachers as professionals" and represents "the beginning of a long-term culture change" according to union President Mark Simon. The county is located in a suburb of Washington, D.C., contains 189 schools and 134,000 students, and is consistently ranked in the top five districts based on Maryland State Performance Assessment Program scores.

The contract sets out 31 points including significant new leadership roles for teachers in the areas of staff and curriculum development. These roles include assisting teachers in improving instruction, evaluating teacher performance, mentoring, and dismissing unsatisfactory teachers via a peer review panel of teachers and principals. The contract also includes four paid teacher training days, $1000 a year for elementary school team leaders, and a five percent annual pay raise for the next three years, which would raise the starting salary to $38,683 at the end of the three year period.

Although there is resistance to the changes in some quarters, 92 percent of the union members who voted approved the contract, and 100% of county principals surveyed recently by The George Washington University said the contract was an improvement. The contract reflects the union's emphasis on collaboration and the classroom and is "a huge step for teachers in that their voice is being heard over and over again," according to a bargaining committee member.

Sources: Perez-Rivas, M. (2001, March 26). Teachers moving beyond paychecks. *The Washington Post.* Available at http://www.washingtonpost.com; Maryland State Department of Education website, http://www.msde.state.md.us

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Taking Ownership

As the nation comes to recognize the need to involve teachers more directly in shaping policy and contributing their knowledge and perceptions to decision-making processes, it is clear that concerned groups must do their part (and more) to make this happen. Situated as they are on the lowest rungs of education's professional hierarchy, teachers need a lot of help if their voices are to be heard and heeded. Therefore, to a large degree it is up to players and groups such as these to pitch in:

Teachers: Across the country, teachers are fully aware of the larger demands of school reform, and most are looking for ways to do their job better. Part of the quest for improvement must come from within. As one Task Force member indelicately put it, "Get in the game." Leadership is not handed out like blue books for a college examination. It is largely up to teachers themselves to locate and exploit opportunities for the professional growth and personal development that will increase their qualifications and credibility for leadership. Teaching is admittedly an exhausting, demanding job and a huge time-devourer, but people in many other professional fields are under similarly ferocious pressure. Yet they somehow manage to get published, to take on advocacy roles, to volunteer time and expertise, and otherwise improve themselves, their profession, and, most important, the products they may be developing, serving, or processing.

School Districts: Of the multitude of services school districts can provide or support to better the performance of teachers (and therefore of their students), none quite matches that of resources—pertinent, up-to-date materials for schools, for classrooms, for students, and, too often lost in the shuffle, for teachers themselves. Resources include increased pay (where clearly and fairly merited) as a district-wide priority, adequate allowances for otherwise unprovided classroom materials, and, of special significance, advanced training that bears on the teacher's job. Too many districts are content to support (at least partially) offerings for "advanced" training that have no realistic connection to the needs and responsibilities of the teacher but that represent a bureaucratic step toward salary hikes and improved status. With occasional exceptions, school systems assign a low priority to in-service training, which too often consists of a couple of days off during the school year and a few days of "planning" in late August or early September. No career field pays less attention to enhancing the qualifications of its professionals or their development than does public education.

Teacher Unions: Solidarity is important, but achieving it within unions should not mean discouraging members from launching independent initiatives to help improve school performance (or that of teachers). Too, unions have been asserting a more active presence in matters affecting instruction and school-wide matters rather than limiting themselves to the bread-and-butter issues that have traditionally been their bailiwick. Local union leaders, in particular, should explore specific ways to capitalize on the still largely untapped strengths of their members, especially those whose specialized knowledge could contribute to developing more competent and enlightened school leadership in the instructional realm.

Higher Education: As described earlier, NCATE, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, among others, are doing much to professionalize teaching. But most of higher education, specifically the huge majority of mostly prosperous colleges and departments that do not consider themselves to be trainers of future public school teachers, is notably absent from any aspect of school reform. This may be a tired issue, but that does not mean that it should not be addressed. It may take political pressure on state legislatures or trustees, but at least some of the seemingly limitless intellectual and physical resources of the

nation's great universities should be used to help fulfill the academy's implicit civic obligation to play a strong role in such obvious areas as professional development, leadership training, and instructional content.

"What we need is a partnership in which teachers are trained, encouraged, and required to be learners; where educators, legislators, and school board members are educated and informed about needs and issues, where everyone has a role to play, where there is no finger-pointing, where planning is collective, and where participants 'think outside the box' together." Task Force member

Business Leaders: Thousands of corporations and business leaders, as well as the national and local organizations that represent their interests, have long been directly involved in trying to make schools more productive and efficient. Their support is becoming, on the whole, a welcome ingredient in contemporary school reform, especially in promoting achievable academic standards, different kinds of evaluation, and maximum feasible accountability—and, equally important, in aligning all three. Although corporate experience in these areas does not always transfer easily to public institutions, the business community should promote its basic premises and be prepared to offer a helping hand. At the same time, businesses that have developed (and applied) systems of shared responsibility in management should come forward to share their experience with school systems.

Mass Media: Both the print and electronic media have been ambivalent in their treatment of teachers. Locally-based media often run positive stories about the achievements of innovative teachers, while the national media tend to be critical of the performance of the profession as a whole. With rare exceptions, however, neither has paid much attention to the enhanced role that teachers can and logically should play as part of a school or district's policy apparatus. Yet large and middle-size school systems have media relations specialists whose job is to provide timely and accurate information on such topics. (Smaller systems do not customarily have the resources to employ public relations specialists, but the need there is ordinarily not as great. Teachers in small districts tend to get more respect, and they are often more involved in deliberations of policy issues.) There are countless ways to draw attention to the leadership potential of teachers, and public relations professionals should be able to help build a public climate sympathetic to the idea.

Leadership in Your Own Backyard

Leadership in public education is a matter of guiding a community to realize its potential to do the best job it can for its children. There are many priorities but only limited resources with which to succeed. And no action can really succeed without consensus for a focused, shared vision of what must be done. IEL encourages you to:

- ***Gain consensus*** on and backing for your community's vision and goals for its schools. If held strongly enough, they will help guide the community in a constructive fashion, especially when the issues become complicated and controversial, and the going gets rough.
- ***Involve*** representatives from as many different sectors as possible—education, government, business from both the "old" and "new" economies, the communications media, and others.
- ***Do your homework*** by collecting as much data and information as possible about teacher leadership issues in your community—challenges, opportunities, previous performance, the goals you have set, and the situation in communities with characteristics generally similar to yours.
- ***Examine teacher leadership issues*** within the broader framework of the community's shared education goals. Analyze your teacher leadership structures with a view to improving them if they appear to fall short.
- ***Discuss and debate*** the particular teacher leadership challenges, opportunities and options for action described in this report, using your community's shared education goals as the framework.
- ***Plan*** specific teacher leadership actions that will work for your community, so that your friends and neighbors are aware of the significance of school leadership issues.

Many of these actions are basically political, and leaders must engage the general public in this work. Taxpayers want good schools and generally agree that this will require investment. But most people have little or no understanding of the importance of teacher leadership. This means you will need to start building public awareness for the concept and support for options and approaches such as those described in this report.

Suggested Questions

To provide a starting point for discussion in your community, this report provides a number of questions that you might want to examine. Expect that differences of opinion and temporary impasses will surface in your discussions, just as they did in the task force meeting. Maintaining focus on group goals and respecting all participant perspectives will keep your discussions on track.

Recruiting Quality Teachers for Our Schools

- Are we facing a shortage of qualified, motivated teachers in our community?
- What kind of teacher turnover rate does our community have? What reasons do teachers give for leaving the profession?
- Do teachers in our community feel isolated and alienated or do they feel their input is valued in school decisions?
- Are the teacher salaries in our community competitive? Are the schools clean, safe, and well-maintained?

- What recruitment efforts are in place to ensure an adequate supply of qualified and effective teacher-leaders?
- Do teacher demographics in our community mirror the demographics of the student body? If not, how can we support more representative recruitment practices?
- From what sources do we recruit our teachers? Are we satisfied with the results?
- Does our community recruit teachers from alternative preparation programs?

Supporting Quality Teachers

- Are new teachers in our schools provided instructional support, technical resources, and mentoring? What about a community orientation and assistance finding affordable housing?
- Do teachers in our community have frequent and meaningful opportunities for peer networking and collaboration? Do our schools encourage action research and the sharing of effective instructional approaches?
- Do the preparation and professional development our teachers receive expose them to policy issues, management and leadership skills, and the pedagogic implications of demographics, politics, and cultures?
- Are there adequate numbers of substitute teachers and other incentives for teachers to participate in professional development activities outside the school building?
- Are the roles of teachers differentiated?
- Is teaching in our community a "flat" career or is there a ladder for professional advancement?

Ensuring Leadership Opportunities for Teachers

- What opportunities for teacher leadership do our schools and our district support?
- Which unions or groups, if any, represent our teachers in salary discussions? Are they open to examining a greater leadership role for teachers?
- Are skilled teachers positioned to provide instructional leadership?
- Are teachers in our community actively involved in designing curricula and selecting textbooks and instructional materials?
- Are teachers actively involved in professional development activities such as developing and presenting in-service training, mentoring, peer coaching and the like?
- Do teachers have meaningful input into the school budget process? Do teachers in our community supplement the school budget from their own pockets?
- Do teachers have active roles in selecting and evaluating administrators and teachers in our community?
- Are teachers actively involved in setting school and district policy for student behavior, promotion, retention, and discipline?

Evaluating and Recognizing Quality Teachers

- Does our community or school district have professional standards for teachers? How do they relate to student performance standards?
- Are our community's teachers evaluated on a regular basis? How do these evaluations provide teachers with the information they need to grow professionally?

- How are accountability measures applied to teachers? Are principals, teachers, and students provided with the resources and supports needed to meet rigorous accountability measures?
- What incentives are built into our teacher evaluation and accountability systems to encourage lifelong learning and to recognize teacher leaders for their contributions and accomplishments?

Ensuring Community Support for Quality Teachers and Teacher-Leaders

- How can we promote better public understanding of teacher leadership roles?
- What community members, resources, and organizations are potential partners in supporting quality teachers and teacher-leaders?
- How do we communicate with the community and our stakeholders? How can we improve our communications strategies?
- Do we have a strong, positive relationship with the media serving our community?

Speak Up

To help the Initiative provide the best tools and resources possible for local and regional leadership efforts such as yours, you are invited to contact IEL with news about what is happening in your community:

- What local, regional, or state actions do you plan to take to address teacher leadership issues in your area?
- Can you provide examples of effective programs, initiatives, or organizations that might provide useful models for others around the country?
- What additional tools, resources, or information would help you strengthen teacher leadership in your area?
- Has this report been useful to you? How?

IEL hopes to incorporate your input in upcoming publications and the Web site of our School Leadership for the 21st Century Initiative. Please contact IEL by any of the following means:

Mary Podmostko, *Project Associate*
Institute for Educational Leadership
1001 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 310
Washington, DC 20036
202-822-8405, ext. 31
Fax 202-872-4050
podmostkom@iel.org

References

Abrams, D. (2001, February 21). Hiring teachers gets trickier for other counties. *Montgomery County Gazette.* Available at http://www.gazette.net/search/

Barth, R.S. (2001, February). Teacher leader. *Phi Delta Kappan 82,* (4).

Blair, J. (2001, February 2). Lawmakers plunge into teacher pay. *Education Week.* Available at http://www.edweek.org/edsearch.cfm

Bradley, A. (2000, April). Presto, change-o. *Teacher Magazine.* Available at http://www.edweek.org/edsearch.cfm

Darling-Hammond, L. (1999, January-February). Educating teachers: The Academy's greatest failure or its most important future? *Academe 85,* (1).

Darling-Hammond, L. (1997). *The right to learn: A blueprint for creating schools that work.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Darling-Hammond, L. & Loewenberg Ball, D. (1998). *Teaching for high standards: What policymakers need to know and be able to do.* Philadelphia, PA: National Commission on Teaching & America's Future and Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

Doyle, D. (2001, March). A liberal education. *The School Administrator.* Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators. Available at http://www.aasa.org/publications/sa/2001_03/doyle.htm

Education Week & Pew Charitable Trust. (2000). *Quality counts 2000: Who should teach?* Bethesda, MD: Education Week. Available at http://www.edweek.org/sreports/qc00/

Elmore, R.F. (2000). *Building a new structure for school leadership.* Washington, DC: Albert Shanker Institute.

Farkas, S., Foley, P. & Duffett, A. with Foleno, T. & Johnson, J. (2001). *Just waiting to be asked? A fresh look at attitudes on public engagement.* New York, NY: Public Agenda. Available at http://www.publicagenda.org/specials/pubengage/pubengage.htm

Farkas, S., Johnson, J. & Foleno, T. with Duffett, A. & Foley, P. (2000). *A sense of calling: Who teaches and why.* New York, NY: Public Agenda. Available at http://www.publicagenda.org/aboutpa/aboutpa7.htm

Koppich, J.E. (2001). *Investing in teaching.* Washington, DC: National Alliance of Business.

Merrow, J. (2001). *Choosing excellence.* Lanham, MD: Scarecrow.

Metropolitan Life Foundation. (2000). *The Metropolitan Life survey of the American teacher, 2000: Are we preparing students for the 21st century?* New York, NY: Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. Available at http://www.metlife.com/Companyinfo/Community/Found/Docs/2000pdf.html

Milken, L. (2000). *Teaching as the opportunity: The Teacher Advancement Program.* Santa Monica, CA: Milken Family Foundation. Available at http://www.mff.org/publications/publications.taf

National Commission on Teaching & America's Future. (1996). *What matters most: Teaching for America's future.* New York, NY: Author. Available at http://www.nctaf.org/publications/whatmattersmost.html

Perez-Rivas, M. (2001, March 26). Teachers moving beyond paychecks. *The Washington Post.* Available at http://www.washingtonpost.com

Steelman, L.C., Powell, B. & Carini, R.M. (2000, Winter). Do teacher unions hinder educational performance? Lessons learned from state SAT and ACT scores. *Harvard Education Review,70* (4).

Task Force on Teaching as a Profession. (1986). *A nation prepared: Teachers for the 21st century.* New York, NY: The Carnegie Foundation.

Terry, P.M. (1999–2000). Empowering teachers as leaders. *National Forum of Teacher Education Journal 10E,* 3. Lake Charles, LA: National Forum Journals. Available at http://www.nationalforum.com/TERRYte8e3.html

Troen, V. & Boles, K.C. (1993, November 3). Teacher leadership: How to make it more than a catch phrase. *Teacher Magazine.* Available at http://www.edweek.org/edsearch.cfm

Tyson, H. (1993). *Who will teach the children?* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Urbanski, A. & Erskine, R. (2000, January). School reform, TURN, and teacher compensation. *Phi Delta Kappan 81,* 5. Available at http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kurb0001.htm

Wilson, M. (1993, March). The search for teacher leaders. *Educational Leadership 50,* 6.

IEL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Buzz Bartlett
Director, Corporate Affairs
Lockheed Martin Corporation

Bert Berkley
Chairman of the Board
Tension Envelope Corporation

Badi Foster
President
Phelps Stokes Fund

Mary Hatwood Futrell
Dean
Graduate School of Education
and Human Development
The George Washington University

James A. Kelly
Founding President
National Board for Professional
Teaching Standards

Floretta Dukes McKenzie
Founder and Chairwoman
The McKenzie Group, Inc.

John May, Treasurer
Partner
New Vantage Partners, LLC

Arvin Mueller
Vice President and Group Executive
General Motors Power Train

Neal R. Peirce
Contributing Editor
The National Journal

James J. Renier, Chair
Retired Chairman and CEO
Honeywell

Ted Sanders
President
Education Commission of the States

P. Michael Timpane
Senior Advisor for Education Policy
RAND Corporation

Michael D. Usdan
President
The Institute for Educational Leadership

IEL PROGRAMS OF WORK

Developing Leaders
Strengthening School-Family-Community Connections
Connecting and Improving the Systems that Support Children and Youth
Governing
Improving Preparation for Work

Leadership for Student Learning

A Report Series published by the Institute for Educational Leadership on:

Principal Leadership
District Leadership
Teacher Leadership
State Leadership
Urban School Leadership

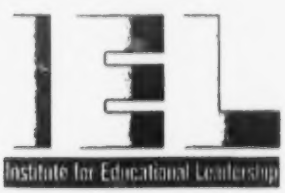
This publication was made possible by grants from:

The Metropolitan Life Foundation,which provided special support for the work of the Task Force on Teacher Leadership
The Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the United States Department of Education
The Ford Foundation
The UPS Foundation
The Carnegie Corporation of New York

The statements made and views expressed are solely the responsibility of the authors.

Ordering Information

Single copies of this report are available free of charge. For all orders, contact Mary Podmostko via e-mail (podmostkom@iel.org), by fax (202) 872-4050, or in writing at the address below. Copies can also be downloaded from www.iel.org.



1001 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 310
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 822-8405
Fax (202) 872-4050
iel@iel.org
www.iel.org